

## "Kokoro (True Heart)" by Velina Hasu Houston

**Summary:** When Yasako and her family move to the United States, she struggles to adapt to American life while retaining Japanese culture in herself and her young daughter. Her husband decries her inability to acculturate yet expects her to conform to traditional Japanese family roles. When she discovers her husband's infidelity and must respond to his mistress' threats, Yasako believes the only way to preserve her dignity is *oyako shinju* (parent-child suicide).

### Activities for students:

#### Pre-reading

- \*\* Japanese words/phrases found in the play
- bun-cha:* evening tea
  - bun-shin:* Japanese belief that the child is a part of the mother
  - chan:* used after a person's given name to express intimacy and affection; also used as a diminutive for children; (i.e. Kuniko-chan)
  - kokoro:* spirit; heart; mind
  - kuro-ko:* stage assistants who help actors with their costumes and props; they are usually dressed completely in black
  - obon:* Japanese summer festival during which people express their gratitude to their dead ancestors
  - obon dori:* religious folk dance that is done to comfort the spirits of the dead. People gather around a wooden platform at a temple or shrine which is decorated with lanterns and dance to the accompaniment of traditional drum and flute music. The dances differ according to

locality, and today many modern or even foreign songs and dances have been introduced into the *obon* festival.

*okaasan*: mother

*otosan*: father

*o-manju*: bean-paste filled bun

*oyaku shinju*: parent-child suicide

*yukata*: cotton summer kimono

## \*\* Cultural Defense - Group Activity (one class period)

### \*\* Objectives

1. to examine "cultural defense" and apply it to case studies
2. to identify arguments for and against a cultural defense
3. to introduce and define *oyako shinju*

### \*\* Procedures

1. Divide the class into groups of three or four and instruct students that they will examine cases in which defendants asked courts to excuse them from or reduce their liability on the basis of culture. (A list of cultural defense cases and a lesson plan developed by the Washington State Courts can be found at this Web address:  
  
<http://www.courts.wa.gov/educate/lessons/Cultdef.html>.) One of the cases deals with a Japanese woman living in California who attempted *oyaku shinju*.
2. Ask students to carefully read their assigned case and formulate two or

three arguments for and two or three arguments against allowing culture to be used as justification for acts committed in the United States.

3. Each group should select a recorder to write down arguments and a spokesperson to report the arguments to the class.
4. After the spokesperson from each group has given arguments for and against cultural defense, open the discussion to the entire class.
5. Consider inviting a law/social studies teacher or an attorney to lead this group activity.

**\*\*      *Obon* - Introduce the Japanese Festival of the Dead**

1. Have students first free write and then discuss what they think happens to a person's spirit/soul after death. How do they show respect for relatives and friends who are deceased?
2. Tell students about *obon*, the Japanese name for a summer festival generally held mid-July (lunar calendar) or mid-August (solar calendar) during which time people express their reverence and gratitude to their ancestors. There is a Buddhist belief that during *obon* the spirits of the dead return home to visit. Customs during *obon* help people welcome the spirits, entertain them and bid them farewell. Cleaning grave sites, lighting lanterns, and placing food offerings of rice, vegetables, fruit, cakes, sweets and wine on the spirit altar are common practices.

\*\* Discuss roles of Japanese mothers vs roles of American mothers

1. Have students brainstorm an American mother's roles, duties, and responsibilities.
2. Have students discuss what they know about a mother's role in contemporary Japanese society.
3. Put a T-chart on the board or an overhead transparency illustrating similarities and differences.

*Background on author*

A prolific writer and one of the most widely produced Asian American playwrights, Houston's early plays are based on family experiences. Born in Tokyo, Japan, in 1957, Velina Hasu Houston immigrated at the age of two with her Japanese mother and African American - Native American G.I. father. The family settled in Junction City, Kansas, near Fort Riley, but within their home the Houstons lived as if in Japan. "In my house Japanese culture reigned. Father adhered to this and we ate Japanese food every day. My mother was adamant about keeping that" (qtd. in Uno 156). Houston wrote a trilogy that chronicles her mother's decision to marry an American and leave her ancestral home only to be confronted by hostility and intolerance upon meeting her African-American relatives. "Tea," which concludes the trilogy and tells the story of five Japanese war brides, was the first play by an Asian American woman to be produced at major Off Broadway and regional mainstream theatres. "Tea" won several awards and was selected as one of the best ten plays by women worldwide for the Susan Smith Blackburn Prize in London.

Although Houston's work has evolved from autobiographical plays to dramas that address a wide range of issues, she continues to be inspired by her mother's story. "My favorite type of character to write about is the Shin-Issei Japanese woman, any native-born Japanese woman who comes to America and grows through the process of trying to survive here. It is the native Japanese woman in America who fascinates me; culturally I feel very close to her" (qtd. in Uno 159).

Currently Ms. Houston is Associate Professor and Director of the Playwriting Program at the University of Southern California. Not only is Ms. Houston an award-winning playwright, but she is also a screenwriter, essayist and poet. An advocate of Asian American theatre, she recently edited two anthologies: The Politics of Life: Four Plays by Asian American Women and But Still, Like Air, I'll Rise: New Asian American Plays.

*Sources for "Kokoro (True Heart)"*

Houston's interest in *oyaku shinju* evolved from conversations with her mother about her mother's troubles as a new immigrant in the United States in the early 1960s. "When my mom was widowed when I was 10 and sister was 12, this was something she contemplated herself. I discovered that this is something many Japanese women think about but never act on" (qtd. in "Velina Hasu Houston"). After these conversations, Houston researched several incidents of *oyaku shinju*. These real-life incidents chronicled in newspapers fed her desire to write this play. She wrote, "The characters and situation are of my own making and entirely fictitious. I combined a variety of ideas to create the play, but drowning is a very common form of death with regard to *oyaku shinju*" (Re "Kokoro"). One of the incidents Houston may have read about is the *People v. Kimura* case in California. Fumiko Kimura, a 32-year-old immigrant who came from

Japan fourteen years earlier, tried to drown herself, her infant daughter, and her four-year-old son by entering the ocean on Santa Monica Beach after learning of her husband's extramarital affair. She survived but her children did not. She was charged with murder, but 4000 local Asians signed a petition claiming that in Japan *oyako shinju* is not considered murder. In the end she pleaded guilty to manslaughter and received five years probation ("Cultural Dynamics and the Unconscious in Suicide in Japan" and an untitled Web article).

### Post Reading

1. Using the 5Ws technique, briefly review the story.

*When:* 1985

*Where:* San Diego, California; Japan; the Netherworlds

*Who:* **Yasako Yamashita** - a Japanese woman in her early 30s

**Hiro Yamashita** - Yasako's husband, a Japanese man, 39

**Shizuko Mizoguchi** - a Japanese woman who is a waitress in Hiro's restaurant,  
early 30s

**Fuyo** - a spirit, Yasako's mother

**Angela Rossetti** - an attorney

**Evelyn Lauderdale** - a neighbor of the Yamashitas

*What:* After six years of living in the United States, Yasako wants to return to Japan with her husband Hiro and daughter Kuniko. Hiro, who owns a successful restaurant in San Diego, wants to remain in California. When Yasako discovers that her husband is having an affair and his mistress threatens her, Yasako tries to drown her daughter and herself. Kuniko drowns but Yasako is rescued and charged with

murder. Yasako's attempt at *oyako shinju* begins a cultural conflict as her husband and American society react to what she has done. To some it is an unforgivable crime; to others her action is viewed as a cultural necessity.

*Why:* Yasako's reasons for *oyako shinju* after she discovers her husband's affair are complex. Yasako was raised by a traditional Japanese mother who instilled in her daughter Japanese culture and values. Although Yasako lived in the United States for six years, she remained Japanese in her thinking and lifestyle, isolated from American culture. She did not drive or know how to ride a bus, knew nothing of her husband's business, and had no hobbies or close friends. Thus Yasako lacked a support system which might have sustained her in time of family conflict. Furthermore, *oyako shinju* may be a way for Yasako to get revenge on her husband. By killing Kuniko, she is punishing Hiro. In many cases of *oyako shinju*, however, there is a strong tendency for the mother to consider the child as an essential part of herself. *Shinju* literally means "heart-inside" or "oneness of hearts" (qtd. in "Cultural Dynamics and the Unconscious in Suicide in Japan"). Yasako describes her relationship with Kuniko as "*bun-shin.... My body divides to create the child and we are one*" (117). Yasako devoted her entire existence to her daughter. Because of this symbiotic bond, Yasako believes that nobody in the world, especially Hiro and his mistress, could take care of Kuniko better than she. Thus Yasako drowns Kuniko because she deeply loves her, and she wants to take her own life so that she and Kuniko can reunite in the afterlife.

## 2. Discussion Questions (All focus on literary analysis)

### **Characters**

#### *Yasako*

- \*\* What do you learn about Yasako and her life through her journals?
- \*\* Find evidence in the play that illustrates Yasako's difficulty accepting and adjusting to American culture.
- \*\* Yasako names her daughter Kuniko which means "child of the country" in Japanese. What does naming her daughter Kuniko tell the reader about Yasako and her values?
- \*\* At the end of Act 1, Scene 2, there are three brief "snapshots" of Yasako in which she tries to get medical assistance for Kuniko, tries to communicate her name, and tries to speak with Kuniko's teacher. What do these "snapshots" have in common? What do they show the reader/audience about Yasako?
- \*\* How would Yasako define her roles as a mother and a wife?
- \*\* Why won't Yasako plead "temporary insanity"?
- \*\* How does Houston create reader/audience sympathy for Yasako's character in her play?
- \*\* Yasako wants to die and join Kuniko in the afterlife. Why does she change her mind at the end of the play and chose life over death?
- \*\* How do Yasako's actions at the play's end convey Houston's themes or messages?

#### *Hiro*

- \*\* Find evidence in the play that illustrates Hiro's paradoxical attitude toward



Yasako: he decries her inability to acculturate yet expects her to conform to accepted Japanese standards of a mother's and a wife's role.

- \*\* How does Houston develop Hiro's character so that he is more than simply a stereotypical unfaithful husband?

*Shizuko*

- \*\* Using specific examples of her language and actions, characterize Shizuko.
- \*\* How does the fact that Shizuko is pregnant with Hiro's son intensify the conflict in the play?

*Evelyn Lauderdale*

- \*\* How is Yasako's neighbor more of a plot device in this play than she is a credible character?

*Angela Rossetti*

- \*\* Houston uses Ms. Rossetti not only as Yasako's defense attorney but also as a representation of American motherhood. By examining Ms. Rossetti's character and by reviewing Yasako's beliefs on motherhood, compare and contrast the roles of mothers in American and Japanese society.

*Fuyo*

- \*\* What are the roles of Fuyo, the spirit of Yasako's mother, in this play?
- \*\* *Fuyo* in Japanese can mean "support when raising children." How is Fuyo's name appropriate for her character and her role in the play?

*Kuniko*

- \*\* Typical of children, Kuniko accidentally hurts herself--she runs into furniture,

falls off monkey bars. How do Yasako and Hiro respond to Kuniko's accidents and injuries? Why does Houston put these accidents into her play?

\*\* Why does Houston only allow the reader/audience to hear the voice of Kuniko but never physically see her on stage?

\*\* If a director chose to cast a young actress in the role of Kuniko, how would the physical presence of Kuniko affect the play and its meaning?

### **Motifs**

*ocean* The ocean, its waves, sounds, and the world beneath it play a significant role in the play. Trace references to the ocean throughout the play and then discuss how it contributes to plot development, character motivation and theme.

*songs* Two children's songs, an American one, "Down the River," and a Japanese one, "*Haru ga kita*" are found in the play's script. After finding scenes in which these songs are sung, discuss their significance. How does Yasako's attitude toward Kuniko singing "Down the River" change from the beginning to the end of the play? What does this change in attitude show about Yasako's character? How does it contribute to the play's meaning?

*food* Both American and Japanese food are mentioned several times. After listing examples of food in the play, discuss how references to types of food contribute to the play's conflicts and its meaning.

### **Prologue**

\*\* Not all plays open with a prologue. Why might Houston begin "Kokoro (True Heart)" with a prologue? What purposes does it serve in this play?

## Dramatic Style

- \*\* Literary critics have described Houston's style as a blend of Japanese Noh, western realism, and her own special brand of magic realism. In "Kokoro (True Heart)" how does Houston blend elements of Japanese Noh, realism, and magic realism to convey her messages?

### 3. Writing Prompts

#### *Yasako's Journal*

- \*\* After Yasako reads Shizuko's letter in Act 1, Scene 2, the stage directions read: "[Yasako] writes in the journal" (104). Write a journal entry that Yasako might have written after reading Shizuko's letter in which she asks Yasako to divorce Hiro and return to Japan.
- \*\* Assuming that Yasako continues to write in her journal while in prison, compose entries in which Yasako reflects on the following:
- \*\* Ms. Rossetti's first visit in which she informs Yasako that she has been charged with murder.
  - \*\* Evelyn's first visit in which she brings Yasako *o-manju*.
  - \*\* Ms. Rossetti's visits in which she tries to explain the American public's reactions to Yasako and Yasako tries to justify her reasons for *okayō shinju*.
  - \*\* Hiro's visit
  - \*\* Evelyn's visit in which she brings "special tea"

*Newspaper articles and editorials*

- \*\* When Evelyn visits Yasako in prison, she tells Yasako that a newspaper article said "horrible things" (116) about Yasako. Write the news article that Evelyn may have read which reported Kuniko's drowning, Yasako's rescue, and Yasako's murder charge.
- \*\* When Angela visits Yasako in prison in Act 2, Scene 1, she brings news articles and tells Yasako, "You've become a celebrity. Some Americans feel sympathy for you" (123). Yasako's response to the articles, "Why do they call me this 'Medea?'" (123), indicates that the media drew parallels between Medea's story and her story. Using allusions to the Greek play Medea, write a news story that creates sympathy for Yasako's case or one that shows hostility and intolerance toward Yasako.
- \*\* Research cases of "cultural defense," particularly the case of Fumiko Kimura who attempted *oyaku shinju*. Then write an editorial arguing in favor of "cultural defense" or an editorial arguing against it. In the editorial refer to specific cases.

*Analytical essays*

- \*\* In an essay entitled "Steel Chrysanthemums," Houston calls her mother and the women in "Tea" "steel chrysanthemums." She writes, "[My mother's] a very gentle soul, this provincial woman from Japan cut from the prewar Kansai woman mold, and yet she survived....Most people think she's so malleable and quiet and unobtrusive, but the reality is that my mother is very strong and there's a steel core inside" (qtd. in Uno 157). Using specific textual examples, explain how Yasako

is also a "steel chrysanthemum."

\*\* One of Houston's goals as a playwright is to dispel myths and debilitating stereotypes about Asian women found in the media and entertainment industry-- the treacherous dragon lady or villain, the demure lotus flower, the exotic prostitute or geisha, the tragic butterfly, the model minority, the docile plaything or maid, and so forth. Shizuko calls attention to this stereotyping when she tells Yasako that her ex-husband "was looking for Madame Butterfly" (101). Later in the play, Yasako responds to Ms. Rossetti's comment that Japanese women are not viewed as aggressive with, "You merely saw 'Shogun' on American TV and now you are expert, ne? I saw 'Shogun.' It was like Gone with the Wind, but Japanese style. Are you Scarlett O'Hara?" (120). Using specific textual references to Yasako's and Shizuko's characters, prove that Houston has created women who do not conform to the myths and stereotypes of Asian women.

\*\* Beloved in Toni Morrison's novel Beloved is a real ghost, but there are also psychological, historical and cultural ghosts in the novel symbolized by Beloved's character. Similar to Beloved, Fuyo is more than the real spirit of Yasako's mother who returns for *obon*. She, too, represents psychological, historical and cultural ghosts. Analyze the types of "ghosts" that Fuyo symbolizes and explain how they contribute to the play's meaning.

\*\* Write an analysis of one of the poems Yasako recites:

"She swims so long at sea..." (125)

"Bare of branches..." (128)

In the analysis explain the poetic devices Houston uses to convey the poem's meaning and explain how the poem contributes to the play and its meaning.

- \*\* Many of the discussion questions can be used for analytical essays.

## Related Activities

### *Research Topics/Reports*

- \*\* Divide the class into groups of three or four and assign each group an aspect of Japanese culture or society related to the play to research. After each group researches the topic using both print and Internet sources, group members give a presentation to the class using visuals or, if relevant, a demonstration.
- \*\* Noh drama - its history, conventions, costumes, masks, stage design
- \*\* *Obon* festival - its history and customs
- \*\* Family roles in traditional and contemporary Japanese society, particularly the role of women as mothers
- \*\* Sun Goddess Amaterasu in Japanese creation myths
- \*\* Japanese tea ceremony and how it differs from daily uses and types of tea in Japan
- \*\* Japanese children's festivals - Children's Day, Boy's Day, the Doll Festival
- \*\* Houston's conversations with her mother and her research of several incidents of *oyako shinju* reported in newspapers inspired her to write "Kokoro (True Heart)." Research the experiences of Houston's mother and of cases of *oyako shinju* reported in newspapers and give a report or write a paper on Houston's mother and cases of *oyaku shinju*, drawing parallels to Houston's play.

*Scene Performances/Staged Readings*

- \*\* Divide the class into groups and assign each group a scene from the play or allow groups to select their scene or two parallel scenes.
1. After each group has its scene(s), students need to read the scene several times aloud until members understand it and have a concept or main idea they want to convey during their performance.
  2. Students cast characters and discuss how to use costumes, props, music, special effects and anything else that will help them convey the concept of the scene.
  3. Students stage the scene(s) making decisions about appropriate placement of characters, about gestures, tone of voice, and so forth.
  4. Groups should rehearse with costumes and props. Although lines do not need to be memorized, each student should be familiar and comfortable with his/her lines.
  5. On festival day, end their performances with a sampling of Japanese treats, especially tea and manju!
- \*\* To explore Kuniko's role, divide the class into groups and have half of the groups rehearse scenes in which the audience only hears Kuniko's voice while the other groups rehearse these same scenes with a group member playing Kuniko's part. After group presentations, have the class discuss how the physical presence of Kuniko affected the scenes and the meaning of the play.
- \*\* Yasako's trial is only referred to in the play. Have students conduct her trial,

using "cultural defense" as the main argument to justify Yasako's attempt at *okayō shinju*. Roles that students will need to research, study and play might include the following:

- \*\* Ms. Rossetti
- \*\* attorney for the state
- \*\* judge
- \*\* jury members
- \*\* witnesses - Yasako, Hiro, Evelyn Lauderdale, Shizuko, people who signed the petition, a psychologist, an expert on cultural defense

Students may think of other witnesses after researching cultural defense cases, *okayō shinju* cases, and the basic procedures for conducting a trial.

- \*\* Divide the class into three groups and assign each group a literary work in which a mother kills her child: Yasako in "Kokoro (True Heart)"; Sethe in Beloved; Medea in Medea. Each group carefully studies the assigned text, looking for evidence to justify the mother's actions. Groups can present their evidence in a debate or by doing staged readings of scenes that illustrate the character's rationale. (If students read or perform scenes, have the group doing Beloved use the screenplay of the novel.)

### **Related Readings**

- \*\* Beloved by Toni Morrison. In this novel a slave escaped with her children and when caught tried to kill all of them. She succeeded in killing one by cutting her throat.



- \*\* Medea by Euripides. In this Greek tragedy a woman kills her children and feeds them to her husband after he deserts her.
- \*\* "The Thirteenth Night" by Higuchi Ichiyo (found in In the Shade of Spring Leaves: The Life and Writings of Higuchi Ichiyo, a Woman of Letters in Meiji Japan). In this story a young Japanese woman tries to divorce her emotionally abusive husband. Her father, however, persuades her to stay in the marriage by invoking her duty to her family and to her husband.
- \*\* "Asa Ga Kimashita" by Velina Hasu Houston. This is the first play in a trilogy and is the story of her mother's decision to marry an African American - Native American G.I. and leave her ancestral home.
- \*\* "American Dream" by Velina Hasu Houston. This play follows "Asa Ga Kimashita" and shows the young couple confronted with hostility, intolerance and rejection upon meeting his relatives in New York.
- \*\* "Tea" by Velina Hasu Houston. In this final play of her autobiographical trilogy, Houston focuses on the lives of five Japanese women who married American servicemen during the United States occupation of Japan. This play is based on Houston's mother and on the lives of several women she knew while growing up in Junction City, Kansas.
- \*\* "Sumidagawa" by Juro Motomasa (found in The Noh Drama: Ten Plays From the Japanese). In this Noh drama a deranged mother searches for her lost child, traveling from Kyoto to the banks of the Sumida River in Edo. When she sees a group of people on the opposite shore holding a memorial service in front of a

grave, she crosses the river and discovers that it is her son's grave. She begins praying in front of the grave. The ghost of her son appears and comforts his mother.

\*\* "Ohara Goko" (authorship unknown) (found in 20 Plays of the Noh Theatre).

This Noh play is based on the concluding sections of The Tale of the Heike, and many passages in the play are quoted from its source. Retired Emperor Goshirakawa journeys to Jakko Temple in Ohara to visit the nun Kenreimon, who is living there in meditation. During his visit, Kenreimon retells the story of the defeat at the battle of Dan-no-ura. She had jumped into the sea with her infant son, the Emperor Antoku, to avoid capture by the enemy Minamoto Clan. Emperor Antoku drowned, but she was rescued and became a nun to pray for her son's soul.

### Annotated Bibliography

Diggs, Nancy Brown. Steel Butterflies: Japanese Women and the American Experience. Albany: State University of New York Press, 1998.

This book, based on interviews with Japanese women living in America, dispels the "Madame Butterfly" myth Americans hold about Japanese women. Some of the topics relevant to "Kokoro" include problems Japanese women face living in the United States, family life, women's responsibility in the home, and aspects of Japanese culture these women tried to preserve in America.

Houston, Velina Hasu, ed. But Still, Like Air, I'll Rise: New Asian American Plays. Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1997.

Houston gathered eleven plays in this anthology which illustrate the complexity of the Asian American experience. Included is her play "Kokoro."

\_\_\_\_\_. "Kokoro (True Heart)." But Still, Like Air, I'll Rise: New Asian American Plays. Ed. Velina Hasu Houston. Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1997. 89-129.

---, ed. The Politics of Life: Four Plays by Asian American Women. Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1993.

Houston's introduction is a personal essay on "surviving in the American theatre as a multiethnic and multicultural female" (xvi). The volume includes autobiographical information on Houston and the script of her play "Asa Ga Kimashita."

\_\_\_\_\_. Re: "Kokoro." [Online] Available e-mail: mertdia@edgewood.k12.wi.us from greentea@ucla.edu, August 8, 2000.

In this e-mail Houston answers questions on the play's source, the role of Fuyo, and the

use of songs.

\_\_\_\_. Tea. Plays in Progress Ser. New York: Theatre Communications Group, 1985.

This volume includes the script of "Tea" and Houston's notes on her play.

Iwao, Sumiko. The Japanese Woman: Traditional Image and Changing Reality. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1993.

A chapter in this book, "Motherhood and the Home," provides insight into contemporary Japanese mothers. The author incorporates personal snapshots of women into her sociological analysis.

Lebra, Takie Sugiyama. Japanese Women: Constraint and Fulfillment. Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1984.

This book blends statistical information and personal accounts in its discussion of Japanese women. One chapter focuses on motherhood.

Maruoka, Daiji and Tatsuo Yoshikoshi. Noh. Osaka: Hoikusha Publishing Co., 1969.

This tiny volume has color photographs of scenes from Noh productions, summarizes several Noh plays, and discusses the history and conventions of Noh drama.

Nakanish, Toru and Kiyonori Komma. Noh Masks. Osaka: Hoikusha Publishing Co., 1983.

A companion to Noh, this book includes explanations and color photographs of the masks used in Noh drama.

Sosnoski, Daniel, ed. Introduction to Japanese Culture. Tokyo: Charles E. Tuttle Company, Inc., 1996.

This compact guide includes sixty-eight informative essays with color photographs on aspects of Japanese culture that often puzzle an outsider.

Uno, Roberta, ed. Unbroken Thread: An Anthology of Plays by Asian American Women.

Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1993.

This volume complements Houston's Politics, and, like Houston, Uno discusses in her introduction the history of Asian American theatre and women's roles in it. The anthology has biographical information on Houston and the script of "Tea."

Velina Hasu Houston. [Online] Available <http://www.fb10.uni-bremen.de/anglistik/kerkhoff/ContempDrama/HoustonVenlinaHusu.htm>, August 1, 2000.

This helpful site provides biographical information on Houston and a discussion of her plays "Tea" and "Kokoro."

### **Web Sites on *oyako shinju***

<http://www.courts.wa.gov/educate/lessons/Cultdef.htm>

This is a lesson plan on cultural defense developed by the Institute for Citizen Education in Law, Seattle, WA.

<http://www.princeton.edu/~lawjourn/Spring98/ferraro.htm>

In this untitled article, one finds a discussion of cultural defense and a reference to *People v. Kimura*, an *oyako shinju* case.

<http://www.japanpsychiatrist.com/Abstracts/Shinju.html>

This excellent article, "Cultural Dynamics and the Unconscious in Suicide in Japan," discusses two kinds of suicide peculiar to the Japanese: *shinju* and *inseki jisatsu*.

### **Web Sites on the *Obon* Festival**

<http://www.geocities.com/Tokyo/Island/6653/obonlink.htm>

This is a page of links to sites on *obon*.

<http://www-japan.mit.edu/mit/culture-notes/Aug/obon.html>

This site explains aspects of the *obon* festival and includes photographs.

<http://www.geocities.com/Tokyo/Island/6653/obon1.htm>

This is another site that explains the *obon* festival and includes photographs.

<http://mothra.rerf.or.jp/ENG/Hiroshima/Festivals/50.html>

A history of the *obon* festival is given on this site.

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